

REMEMBERING THE PAST

In the south central Cascade Mountains of the State of Washington, approximately 13 miles north of the Columbia River and deep in the canyon of the Klickitat River, there is located the small lumber town of Klickitat. This is where I was born in 1925 and where I lived throughout my childhood.

My parents, Virgil and Ruth Toomey, befriended the well-known and well-loved Indian woman, Louise Spino, who was known simply as "Indian Louise." She came to our home there in Klickitat to see us quite often, and it seemed to me that she always had a papoose on her back. Here is a photo of her with her sons, William and Stanley, in 1935, taken in our front yard.



As a little girl at that time I was fascinated with the horse that she always rode when she came to town. My mother was aware that if I couldn't be found when Indian Louise was visiting, all she had to do was find where the horse was tied and she would find me.

Many years passed and there were many changes --- my folks were both gone and I had married and gone East to live where I was raising three daughters.

In 1964 I had an opportunity to make a trip back to Klickitat with my girls so they could see where my "roots" were. At this time I made a point of visiting Indian Louise, then living a few miles from Klickitat at Wahkiakus. Here is the photo of the two of us at that time in front of her wood-frame house.



I returned again to visit in 1988. Indian Louise had since gone on to her "happy hunting ground." Her house, however, was undisturbed, as the Indians felt her spirit was still living there. I went to see her place and took the photo of the old building as it looked at that time.



There are many, many memories embodied in these photos of a very significant person in my life whose spirit truly does live on as far as I am concerned. I have some of her beautiful beadwork as a very tangible and poignant reminder of her presence and her influence in my life.

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